2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

533 **Music and dance.**—Music is clearly tonal, with melodic structures easy to identify. The end of a melody is usually marked with several shrill sounds which are repeated after each coda. Music is both instrumental and choral and usually accompanies dances.

535 Dances are performed under the leadership of the chief. Men and women stamp rhythmically on the ground while turning in a circle. Usually, dancers close one nostril with the left hand to make their singing nasal. Only men perform war dances, forming one or more rows and stepping forward and backward in front of the leader. In the second phase of the dance, they attack a post, a symbolical enemy, with bows and arrows, and clubs. Most of the dances and songs are connected with hunting or seasonal ceremonies, but they may be used at any time for mere entertainment.

534 **Musical instruments.**—Flageolets have four holes and an air duct; three are usually played together, accompanied by a rhythm trumpet made of a piece of bamboo with a hollow calabash fixed to its bottom. Nose flutes (pl. 36, *top, right*) are made of two pieces of calabash glued together with wax and pierced with three holes. One hole is blown with one nostril while the other nostril is closed with the thumb; the other two holes vary the notes. Nose flutes are also played in unison. Double and treble whistles have the air duct cut in the middle of the pipe, so that they can be blown at either end. Panpipes (pl. 36, *bottom, left*) are of two kinds: the common type has five pipes; the other type consists of two or three reeds cut obliquely at the mouth-end. All pipes produce approximately the same note in the latter.

272 **Drinks and narcotics.**—Drinks are made with crushed manioc
● 273 or maize mixed with water, or of palm fruits, especially *Mauritia* sp., *Acrocomia* sp., and *Oenocarpus distichus*. A slightly alcoholic beverage is prepared of wild pineapples mixed with water.

276 The *Nambicuara* are ardent smokers. They cultivate a tobacco with tiny leaves, which they dry between two pieces of wood, crush with their hands, and store in small calabashes. Cigarettes are rolled in special leaves and tied with grass.

MAGIC AND RELIGION

771 The *Nambicuara* believe in the existence of a diffuse power or substance which may occur in objects and in living beings. It is manifest mostly in poisons, some of which are real (see Weapons, p. 366), some purely magical. To the latter belongs the rosin of the barrigudo tree (a Bombacaceae), which is kept in tubes like the true poisons. When thrown by a special technique at an enemy, it is believed to make him swell like the trunk of the tree and die.

776 There are also dangerous spirits of the bush and of water, which may appear in the shape of an animal, especially the jaguar, or in a

252 The Cocozu do not use a barbecue; they roast their meat in the embers. The quantity of ashes they swallow with the roast is considerable.

[Plates p. 230.]

[231] The Tagnani and Tawite build a characteristic type of barbecue. They set up four stakes which they connect with four crosspieces; between these they place two sticks to hold the pieces of meat.

[Fig. 23]

[272] They drink honey mixed with water (hydromel). They like
262 young bees, which they eat with the honey and wax.

They do not allow the maize to ripen, but eat it roasted when
252 still green. Manioc is subjected to the same process, or it is used in grated form to make cakes [beiju].

They press the gratings with embira cord and prepare very white pellets with the starch. To make the cakes, they open a cavity in the hot ashes of the fire and deposit in it a pellet of manioc dough which they smooth out with some piece of wood and with their hands. Then they cover it with ashes and embers; after a period of time which we do not know how they estimate, they uncover a large, roasted, sweet-smelling cake, somewhat sour, but which would be rather pleasant if it were not so covered with ashes and if it had not been prepared by such an unclean process...

[262 824] Green mangaba, (1) no sooner seen, is immediately plucked

1. Fruit of the mangabeira (Hancornia speciosa). (Ed.)

and placed in the embers. When roasted, it turns tender and pleasing to the taste.

[262] From bacaba palm nuts the Tawite make a purplish mush (uidniarê) which tastes like green leaves and which they relish. In order to prepare this uid-niarê, they pound the fruit of the palm and place it in water over the fire. This is actually a decoction.

273 We did not have an opportunity to observe the preparation of any fermented liquids. Yet the Indians make alcoholic beverages by

273 the usual process: they masticate manioc or maize and allow the mush to ferment in large pots. One drink thus extracted from the wild pineapple was held in high regard by the personnel of the Telegraph Line.

[262] They are especially fond of monkey meat--a last vestige,
266 perhaps, of their former cannibalistic tastes.

I do not think that cannibalism still exists among them. But I believe that it has not been long since the habit was lost.

It is true, nevertheless, that they often accuse one another of this practice; they make such accusations in a perfectly clear manner, by means of unequivocal signs.

372 [233] They make fire by rubbing together two rods similar to those found elsewhere in Brazil.

This procedure takes much longer than might be expected.

The Indian begins by placing a dry leaf upon the ground; upon it he rests the "stationary fire stick," which he supports with his foot and knee.

[Fig. 26]

Holding the "movable fire stick" between the palms of his hands, he imparts to it the necessary rotary motion, bearing down with it at the same time against the other stick. This motion forces the hands downward along the rod; [when he gets to the bottom], the Indian starts again from the top. Now and then he stops briefly to lick his palm, which smarts from the friction. After a while, when sweat is already beading his forehead, a spark strikes up among the tinder which has been deposited on the leaf.

This process differs from the classical technique only by the presence of the protective leaf.

Because this procedure is laborious, the Indians carry it out with reluctance. Desirous of obtaining a film which would document all their routine activities, I had great difficulty in persuading an Indian to make fire. This is the reason why, of all gifts, matches are among those valued most highly; to make fire after their fashion on a rainy day or in humid weather is a hard and laborious task.

[262 [Polyporus sp.) The Tagnani and Tawite also eat a certain kind of mushroom which the others disregard.

It is a curious fact that palm cabbage (palmito) is not utilized by the Serra do Norte Indians. Gabriel Soares [234] made it clear in 1587 that the aborigines of the coast prized the leaf buds of the palm tree: "Stupendous palm cabbages, five or six spans in length and as thick as a man's leg, are extracted from the buds of these palms."

Pineapple wine was a common beverage, for Soares goes on to say: "The nature of this fruit is hot and humid, and it is very harmful to those with open wounds or sores; the same pineapples, when green are good for curing sores, for their juice eats away all the rotten and putrid flesh, and the aborigines know this; in such wise does this fruit eat away, that they use its rind to wipe off the rust from their swords and knives and to remove the stains from the clothes they wash; when ripe, the juice is used by the Indians to make a wine which inebriates them; to this end they pluck the fruit not quite ripe, on account of its being more sour..."

The Indians of the Serra do Norte found our salted food unpleasant. They often refused the plates we set before them, giving us to understand that it was the salty flavor which led them to behave in this manner.

Milk (condensed milk) was also rejected in the beginning; they would make a face and say that it was human milk and therefore repulsive: [235] "Anungçú!"

One must know the Indians' gluttony, their insatiable hunger, their continual, unfailing, artless, persistent animus devorandi, fully to comprehend the disgust which led them to such a renunciation.

The children are given to eat of everything; no matter what goes into an Indian's mouth, there is always a crumb for the little one who walks beside him or rests in his arms.

Even the stimulants they use--tobacco, for instance--are shared with the children. More than once I had the opportunity to observe Indians giving cigarettes to children under two. (1)

1. Cf. E. Roquette-Pinto, "A condição da criança entre os Indios do Brasil [The Status of the Child Among the Indians of Brazil," Primeiro Congresso Americano da Criança [First American Congress on Childhood] (Tucumán, 1916).